



DOE Proposes Modification To Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

Changes to WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit

Background

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has proposed modifications to its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP) for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to make DOE environmental cleanup efforts more efficient.

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) issued WIPP's HWFP (Permit Number: NM4890139088-TSDF) in October 1999. The proposed modification would allow the Permittees to monitor for hydrogen and methane in filled panels until final panel closure while continuing to ensure the safety of the employees, public and environment.

What is Proposed?

DOE submitted the Class 2 permit modification request to NMED on November 21, 2007. The proposed change would allow the Permittees to monitor for hydrogen and methane gases in filled panels, until such time that the panel is permanently closed. Below is a summary of the proposed changes:

- Monitor each full panel for methane and hydrogen gas until final panel closure.
- Establish action levels for methane and hydrogen gas that would trigger various activities that may include the installation of the explosion isolation wall component of the existing panel closure system.
- Beginning with Panel 3, add a substantial barrier and a steel bulkhead, in the intake and exhaust drifts of the panel as part of the monitoring program.
- Collect data to be used in determining a final closure for each panel.
- Initiate an inspection schedule and inspection criteria for the explosion isolation walls in Panels 1 and 2 as well as the bulkheads in Panels 3 through 7 until final panel closure.

- Revise VOC monitoring locations in full panels and revise the frequency of VOC monitoring in full panels to monthly until final panel closure.
- Extend final closure dates for Panels 1 through 7 until the year 2016.

Comments

Comments for the record must be sent to Mr. Steve Zappe, New Mexico Environment Department, 2905 Rodeo Park Drive, Building 1, Santa Fe, NM 87505. They also may be e-mailed: steve.zappe@state.nm.us or faxed to 505-476-6060. Only written comments will be accepted and must be received no later than 5 p.m. (MDT) on January 21, 2008. A copy of the permit modification may be viewed or copied at the NMED offices of Mr. Zappe. To be placed on the WIPP mailing list, contact Mr. Zappe at the address above.

For more Information

For more information about transuranic waste shipments and procedures, call the WIPP Information Center at 1-800-336-WIPP (9477). You also may visit the WIPP home page at <http://www.wipp.energy.gov>. Comments to the Permittees regarding this permit modification may be sent to Mr. Bobby St. John, Washington TRU Solutions LLC, P.O. Box 2078, Carlsbad, NM 88221.